

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

OF
POPULAR

LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND ART

Fifth Series

ESTABLISHED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS, 1832

No. 262.—VOL. VI.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 5, 1889.

PRICE 1½d.

JOHN VALE'S GUARDIAN.

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CHAPTER I.

Two schoolboys on a summer morning were marching along the road from Beacon-Hargate to Castle-Barfield, in the tranquil heart of mid-England. Each bore a satchel, in which he carried his books, and a provision of cold meat, bread and butter, and hard-boiled eggs, for dinner. They were each furnished also with a broad-mouthed, frayed, old, green baize bag, charged with round pebbles; and as they swung along, they cast searching glances about the road, as if they kept a keen lookout for something. Every now and then one or other would make a dart and a stoop, would take up and examine a pebble, and then would either throw it with rare precision at a mark, or would add it to the contents of the green baize bag.

These two were of the same age to a day, and nearly to an hour, and were cousins by the mother's side. One was swarthy of complexion and a trifle grim in aspect, a boy of the bulldog British pattern; and the other was fair-haired, fresh-coloured, and gray-eyed, with an amiable, dreamy look. They were rising twelve, the pair of them, and were uncommonly well built and well set up for their age.

'Uncas,' said the dreamy boy, 'we shall have a rare old scrimmage with the Mingoes this morning.'

'Wagh!' said the bulldog boy in answer. He was naturally a youth of few words, and the part of 'the sententious savage,' as dear old Cooper used to call the Indian, suited him to perfection.

They were under the dominion of Cooper, and were soaked and saturated with the lore of Beadle's Sixpenny American Library. They had and enjoyed a daily skirmish with a half-score

or so of the natural enemy of Castle-Barfield, and what would have been a mere undignified pecking-match without the glorious help of fancy, grew to an Indian battle by its aid.

There was no seminary for youth in Beacon-Hargate with the sole exception of a dame-school, presided over by an old woman of singularly forbidding aspect and limited learning; and when by her aid, or in spite of her hindrances, the lads had mastered words of two syllables, they were sent off to school to Castle-Barfield, whither they went daily afoot in all weathers, hail, rain, or shine, the whole year round, holiday-times and Sundays alone excepted. On their very first journey, one Sam Saunders, a Barfield boy, by profession a bird-scarer, had experienced a lively and natural resentment at the presence of boys from another parish on a high-road macadamised at the expense of Barfield ratepayers, and had hailed them with derisive epithets. Finding himself repaid in kind, he had fallen back on the argument of arms, and had stoned them from what seemed a safe distance. The youthful strangers, whether by skill or accident, had come victors out of this first fray; and Sam Saunders, afterwards elevated to the rank and dignity of a Mingo chieftain under the title of the Big Bear, fled weeping from the field. It took a week or two to make him understand that the enemy might be expected at a given hour upon the road; but when that fact at last penetrated his mind, he sent round the fiery cross among his tribe and lay in ambush. There was a great fray that morning, and the invaders of the soil were beaten back, and forced to make a detour, which resulted in their being late for school, and bore further fruit in chastisement at the hands of a

master who was none too unwilling to inflict it.

Then, in the bosom of William Gregg, the bulldog boy, awoke and flamed the fires of vengeance; and the milder soul of John Vale, the dreamy boy, took heat from his companion's fire, and they twain made a compact to live or die together; and they set up a cock-shy in the orchard of Gregg senior, and practised at the same assiduously in all spare moments, until they grew so accurate in aim and wide in range that the foe had fear of them. They began with a medicine-bottle at fifty boyish paces; but in a while they became so deadly that they could no longer afford so frail a target, and had to substitute an old shoe for the bottle, and this they battered daily and hourly to their hearts' great contentment, filling the exercise, as boys can and do, with a thousand warlike imaginings invisible to the eye of any adult watcher.

When they were on the war-path, they were Uncas and Pathfinder one to the other; and Uncas carried, as befitted his wild blood, a scalping-knife of lath. The gentler Pathfinder's instincts made him recoil from the use of such a weapon, but he tolerated his friend's possession of it. They got no end of bruises, and enjoyed themselves mightily, developing in this savage warfare all such virtues as war can breed—courage, endurance, resource, magnanimity, and the like, and were really at bottom less mischievously employed than the pessimist in boyhood might imagine.

They drew near that strip of the enemy's country where battle was most commonly offered, and looked to their arms; that is to say, they shook up the green baize bags and arranged the likeliest pebbles topmost. They attached a superstitious value to stones of a certain form; and a disc-shaped pebble of the size of an old-fashioned copper penny and the thickness of three or four was looked on as a precious find and reserved for moments of great emergency.

On the Beacon-Hargate road was what the country-people thereabouts call a Jacob's ladder, a stile with ten or a dozen steps to it, leading from the low-lying lane to fields on a higher level. The pathway to which this ladder led the traveller lay across a series of gently rolling fields which were called Scott's Hills; and in the middle of the fields was a fairy ring, which had so often been danced round by childish feet that the grass was worn altogether away from it and the circle tramped as hard as a board. The hundred acres of open space the fields afforded gave ample opportunity for advance and retreat, and the Mingoes had chosen it for their own country for years past.

The two boys climbed the Jacob's ladder warily and prospected for 'sign.' The eagle eye of Uncas detected a tousled head beyond the line of the first hill. Almost at the same moment the intrepid pair were observed by the enemy, and a wild cry of defiance was raised. Among

the other advantages of the war-country was a clear echo, which returned all noises with a sudden clap of sound like a vocal box on the ear. This redoubled the noise of warfare, and gave a sense of distance, numbers, and vastness inexpressibly delightful. The enemy appearing on the ridge of the hill in an irregular line, opened a harmless fire, to which the allies disdained reply. The distance was as yet too great for danger; but the Mingoes, with savage cunning, scattered with intent to form a wide circle and attack the advancing body from every side at once.

'Tis long odds, Uncas,' said the Pathfinder: 'nine to two.'

'Wagh!' said Uncas; and accustomed to every wile the foe might try, they separated, one working to the right and the other to the left, so that they might intercept the intended movement.

The precision of their fire made them dreaded, and the enemy was wary of displaying himself too freely. It was a barbarous form of relaxation, no doubt, but the schoolboys fought for their right of way, and men make war in deadlier earnest in assertion of rights and privileges no whit more sacred, and there is a great deal of human nature in boys.

The fight had varying fortunes, but the expedition forced its way at last; and its way out of the dangerous country seemed assured, when a stroke of treasonous vengeance put an end to the war for good and all, doing such serious execution, that the enemy, scared by its own act, fled into hiding-places and appeared no more. The two schoolboys joined each other at the end of the fray, breathed, flushed, and triumphant, and pursued their road with occasional turns to answer the cries from the defeated. This was all in order and in accord with the best traditions of Cooper and the Sixpenny Library; but the two lads fought honestly and loyally, and at the bottom of their hearts not only had no desire to hurt anybody, but had even a kind of camaraderie for the wild tribe they fought with. It was a roughish kind of game, to be sure; but it was no more than a game, after all, and there was not a shade of malice in it. But a certain hulking left-handed fellow, a new recruit on the Barfield side, had been hit a day or two before, and imported a murderous seriousness into the fun. He had taken no part in the affair of that day, but lay in wait with a stone the size of his fist until the boys went past him unsuspectingly at a distance of half-a-dozen yards. Then he launched his missile unseen, and dropped back into the ditch from which he had arisen. The stone struck the fair-haired lad above the ear, as he was laughing and sparkling over the combat just finished, and rolled him over as if it had been a musket bullet.

The bulldog boy his comrade, not as yet knowing what hurt had been done, but boiling into sudden rage at treachery, dashed in the direction from which the stone must have been hurled. The traitorous left-handed one rose to flee, but had no chance except to stay and give battle. The fight was brief and decisive, and the traitor being knocked down, refused to get up again. The avenger went back to his comrade, and the youthful coward in the smock-frock crawled through the hedge and ran. His late comrades drew a little nearer in scattered groups and stared

with frightened eyes, for the fair-haired boy lay where he had fallen and made no sign.

'Jack,' said his comrade, kneeling by him, 'are you hurt?' There was no answer. 'Jack! what's the matter? Speak to a fellow! I say, Jack! it isn't like you to sham. Jack! Jack!' He was crying by this time in a voice so wild and frightened, that his hearers stared with guilty and fear-stricken faces upon one another, and scattered, taking as many ways as there were boys. The wild frightened voice pursued them, and then quavered into tears and silence.

The road was unfrequented, and it might be hours before help came that way. John lay so still and silent that for all the other could tell he might be dead. An inexpressible pang of guilt and grief rived the bulldog heart, and the lad fell on the body of his prostrate friend and fawned upon it and kissed it and wept terrible tears. Men hardly know these extremities of grief and terror.

He had knelt for what seemed an age, when a hand was laid upon his shoulder and a voice spoke to him in a tongue he did not understand, and had never even heard before. He looked up with his tear-blurred face and eyes. 'Oh, please help me to carry him home,' he besought the stranger. 'They have killed him! They have killed him!'

The new-comer knelt upon the grass and rolled the unconscious body gently over. There was a little blood upon the cheek, flowing from a slight incision at the top of the right ear, and guided by this he removed the cap and exposed a great bump which showed with a purplish hue through the close-cut silky light hair.

'Oh, la, la!' said the stranger, and felt about the bump with cautious and gentle fingers. The bulldog boy knelt beside him, staring at him with a faint dawn of hope in his heart and giving now and then a gasping sob. The stranger was like no man he had ever seen before. His skin was of a coffee brown, and his beard and hair and eyes were as black as jet and very lustrous. He wore a shabby jacket of claret-coloured velvet, and a gay pink-striped handkerchief tied in a loose and careless knot at his brown throat under the gay blue-striped collar of his shirt. A little billycock hat was stuck on the back of his curly tangled head, and in each ear he wore a gold ring, as fine as hair at top, and thickening at the bottom to the form of a crescent moon. He had no waistcoat, and his shabby trousers were bound about by a leather strap with a big buckle. He looked altogether strange and outlandish; but when he turned his dark eyes on the lad beside him, and his milk-white teeth flashed between his black beard and moustache in a sympathetic grimace of pity, there was something in his look which bred confidence at once.

'Water,' said the stranger, holding out the cap; 'get water.' He spoke the simple words slowly, and with an air of having to search for them in his mind before he found them.

The boy took the cap and ran with it to where a little runnel which had its source in a field drain-pipe babbled diamond clear. He filled it and ran back with it; but it leaked so fast that for all his haste he arrived with scarcely half a pint. The stranger threw it into the unconscious lad's face, and having fumbled awhile at his

collar, drew a great shining clasp-knife and slit the linen through. 'More,' he said then, and taking off his own hat, offered it. This, being made of a close-beaten felt, came back full, and the foreigner threw it by sharp handfuls into John's face until the gray eyes opened and looked about fainly with no recognition in them, and then closed again.

'His—name?' said the stranger questioningly.

'John Vale.'

'His—home? You—know?' With the same painful slowness and the same air of seeking the words beforehand.

'Yes. There it is. The house with the red roof among the trees, more than a mile away.'

'You spick—too quick,' said the stranger. 'Find—his—home. Come back. Quick.'

William Gregg threw down his bag and satchel and ran as hard as his legs could carry him, though every now and then a sob caught him at the throat and threatened either to choke him or to bring him to a stand-still. Meantime the stranger, walking to the hedge, cut a pair of stout slivers from a hawthorn, and planting one in the turf on either side his unconscious charge's head, took off his coat and suspended it above the boy's face to shade him from the sun, which was by this time growing powerful. When he had done this, he groped gently in the pockets of the coat, and having found tobacco and papers, rolled himself a cigarette, struck a lucifer match upon his trousers, nursed the light in his coffee-brown hands against a faint breeze that was blowing, and so sat puffing, bareheaded in the sun, with his hands about his knees. He was a well-knit, active-looking fellow of about thirty, and very small in stature. He sat like a statue of idleness for half an hour, only moving once or twice to moisten the boy's lips and temples from the water which still lingered in a crease of the felt hat, or to roll and light a new cigarette.

At length there rose a sound of hoofs and wheels, and this coming to a pause in the lane at the foot of the fields, a ponderous man in dusty gray heaved in sight, mounting the Jacob's ladder, and strode solidly towards him. He disappeared once by reason of the rolling formation of the land, but by-and-by showed again near at hand—a grave man, with outstanding eyebrows, honest, simple, steadfast eyes, and a beak like a good-tempered eagle's.

The foreigner rose and confronted him inquiringly. 'His—fazer?' he demanded.

The grave man answering 'Yes,' the stranger drew his coat away from the boy's face and slipped into it with a lounging grace. Then he picked up his hat, waved it twice or thrice to and fro, to shake the water from it, and dropped it anyhow on the top of his black curls, watching the new-comer seriously all the while.

'Poor little chap!' said the father, stooping to raise the boy in his arms. 'It's a nasty knock he's got.—Pick them things up and bring 'em along, will you?'

He spoke with a sidelong gesture of the head; and the foreigner, understanding the sign and the glance which went with it rather than the words, gathered up the satchel, the bag, and the two caps, and obediently followed in the other's ponderous footsteps.

A well-horsed dogcart stood at the bottom of

the ladder, and a man with a straw in his mouth and a general look of stables held the reins. The farmer having carefully descended the steps, held up the boy to him, as if the poor little figure had been no more than a feather's weight. Then he turned upon the foreigner, and holding out one hand for the things he carried, put the other to his pocket with a somewhat doubtful air. He looked with mild inquiry at the shabby jacket and the shabbier trousers and downward to the boots. These being dusty, unblacked, and broken, seemed to decide him, and he drew forth a little handful of silver and held it out.

'Merci!' said the stranger, repelling the offer with both hands. 'No, no, no! Sank you; but no!'

'Take it,' said the farmer, looking again at the broken boots.

The other followed his glance, and smiled with a flash of his white teeth. 'No, no, no!' he said again. 'Sank you, but no! I—have—done;' he paused there and thought for a second or two, and then found 'nossings—nossings.' He paused and thought again, and added, 'Good-luck!' lifting his hat as he spoke.

'Thank you kindly,' answered the farmer. 'There's not a-many of the gypsies as would take the trouble, and fewer as wouldn't take the money. Thank you kindly.'

'No, no!' said the foreigner lightly. 'No sanks. Nossing. Good-luck!'

The farmer, climbing into the dogcart, took the boy in his arms, and was driven away, turning a backward glance at the shabby wanderer who would take no money. The shabby wanderer waved his hat to him, and followed the track of the dogcart along the dusty road.

CHAPTER II.

The bulldog boy had been despatched to look for the doctor, and had started upon his search in an agony of self-accusation. He was a boy of the tenderest heart, under his dogged exterior, and as he ran panting and gasping along the road towards the doctor's house—which, by the way, lay a good three miles off—he exaggerated his own share in the feud with the young ragamuffins of Castle-Barfield, and minimised his companion's share in it, until at last he felt as guilty as a murderer. There was a swelling tide of remorse and terror in his heart, and if once he had allowed it to break beyond bounds, he would have had to sit down and cry helplessly and bitterly. So, being one of those determined fellows who will do what they once take to be their duty if they die for it, and seeing that his one present duty was to find the doctor with all possible speed, he choked down his fears and repentances as best he could, and ran as he had never run in his life before, in spite of his choking throat and swelling heart.

As good fortune had it, the doctor very nearly ran over him at a sudden turning of the road. The messenger could scarcely speak, but got his story out in breathless sobs somehow, and so was picked up and driven back to the farmhouse. The farmer and the injured lad had arrived but a minute or two before, and the dogcart was still standing at the gateway. The doctor jumped down, threw the reins to the boy, and entered.

Young Gregg sat in the doctor's trap and held the reins. The sun shone bright, and the trees rustled in the gay wind. Now and then a carter called to his team or cracked his whip, and there was a distant sound of jangling bells. The doctor's horse champed at his bit, and beat the roadway first with one forefoot and then with the other. Muffled voices spoke within the house, and sometimes the wretched listener heard the sound of hurrying feet upon the uncarpeted stairs. He was profoundly troubled, and felt as guilty as Cain, though there was a piteous exculpation of himself going on within doors all the while.

The hostler came and led off the farmer's horse; and the boy, though he longed to ask if the doctor had as yet said anything, was so weighed upon by his fears that he left the question unspoken, and watched the hostler go through the gate and away past the side of the house as miserably as though he knew that the man carried the last shred of hope with him. Then, when he had sat utterly desolate for a quarter of an hour or so, listening to all the sounds in the house with a strained and dreadful fear, he heard the sound of wheels and hoof-beats behind him, and turning his tear-stained face, saw a ponderous, grave, clean-shaven man in the act of pulling up a few yards away. This personage looked a great deal too big for the trap he rode in, and, indeed, had a way with him of looking too big for any place in which he might find himself. He was a man of huge physique, but he had a grave and ponderous way of magnifying himself, as it were, and seeming bigger than he was. He wore gray clothes of a severe and formal cut; his neckcloth was white; and his hat broad, low-crowned, and stiffly curled at the brim, so that he had something of a clerical or semi-clerical air. His gray eyes were keen, and had all their light upon the surface; his mouth, chin, and jaw gave unmistakable signs of an obstinate will. His face was a vulgarised copy of the great Napoleon's, and Mr Robert Snelling himself may be fairly described as a Napoleon minus the brains which made Napoleon remarkable. That is to say, that he saw his neighbour's side of things insect small, whilst his own side looked big as Behemoth; that he had a will of iron, an indomitable selfishness, and an unusual capacity for tyranny.

Robert Snelling was a seed and corn merchant, and a first-cousin of Farmer Vale's. He was immensely respectable, and greatly respected, and he had such a mastiff-way of going straight to any worldly or social bone he wanted, that people generally made a clear road for him. He was a very remarkable person for a rustic tradesman, and had done some reading and thinking in his time. Most people were a little afraid of him, and though he passed as the keenest trader in those parts of the world, he was also held to be a model of rectitude.

He got out of his trap with a solid slow dignity, and tied up the reins to a part of the trap itself with a deliberate action in which no motion seemed wasted or delayed. There was a weight of will in his walk, in his repose, in the way in which he carried his hands, in every heavy gesture.

'Well—ah—Willyum!' says Mr Snelling to the boy. His voice was of a deep drawing bass, and at the end of a phrase, short or long, it closed

on a high loud note delivered with a snap as quick as the sound of a pistol, and not much softer. In conversation, this method of his seemed to indicate at once a deliberate desire for justice and an irrevocable decision. The profound lingering basso meant choice, forethought, wariness. The loud snap at the end of it said, 'There you are! That's settled and done with.'

He saw that the boy was crying, and looked bitterly distressed; but then, boys cried pretty often, and looked bitterly distressed on grounds which, when a man gave himself the trouble of looking at them, were ludicrously small. It was probable, whatever was the matter, that the boy had done something to deserve it; or if he had not, then he would do later. That was the way with boys—to merit suffering, and to suffer.

He marched heavily into the house in that strong and wilful way of his, always as if he expected opposition and were prepared to bear it down, not swaggeringly or bullyingly, but with a deep-seated bellicose strength. There was a longish garden, full of intertangled vegetables and flowers, between the gate and the farmhouse, and the pathway between them was brick-paved and smooth and lustrous with many years of constant scrubbing. The beans were in flower like an army of black and white butterflies waiting the signal to rise and flutter in the air, and the roses and wallflower loaded the light wind with odour. Mr Snelling gave a satisfied slow sniff as he went, and stalked into the half-gloom of the clean low-ceilinged kitchen, where pans and crocks caught stray gleams of reflected light, and dazzled in them, and a single big red rose pushed its head in at the open diamonded window.

'Hillo! House here!' cried Mr Snelling, smiting a bare deal table resoundingly with his whip as a signal to the inmates.

'Sh!' answered a voice from above, and a moment later there began a sound of cautious steps upon the stair. These came to an end with the appearance of the farmer, whose face looked pained and anxious. He closed the stair-door gingerly behind him and held out his hand to his cousin. 'Our John's met with a gravish mishap,' he said. 'The doctor's up-stairs with him now.'

'Oho!' said Mr Snelling.—'And how did that come to pass?'

'Not so loud, Robert—not so loud!' cried the farmer. 'That voice of thine sets the beams a-trembling overhead. Some young Rip seems to have thrown a stone at the lad. He's been knocked quite senseless, and he's been moaning on his mother, as has been dead this three years. Dr Haycock looks grave about it. I'm afraid the lad's sore hurt.'

'We'll hope not,' answered Snelling, moderating his voice somewhat, and looking as serious as he thought the case demanded. 'You was always a bit disposed to be tremorful and fearsome, John, and to say die before the time came.—Who was the lad that did it?'

'I've had no time to make proper inquiries yet,' the farmer responded. 'It was Will Gregg brought the news.'

'Ah!' cried Snelling, 'twas him, was it? You'll have to dust his jacket for him.'

The drawl and the snap together gave this almost an air of justice; but the farmer inter-

posed: 'I said 'twas young Gregg brought the news.'

'Yes, yes,' replied Snelling in his weighty way. 'We'll sift this.' He marched out of the kitchen into the sunlight, whip in hand, and sought the stables. There he found the hostler, who by this time had got the horse out of harness, and was hissing round him like a whole brood of snakes as he thumped and polished him with a plaited hay wisp. 'James,' said Mr Snelling in a magisterial manner, 'there's a young youth outside guarding the doctor's boss. Send him in to me, and keep an eye on the trap yourself. That chestnut's a bit skittish.'

James, to whom any moment of leisure was tedious without tobacco, paused to take a short black pipe from his waistcoat pocket and to strike a match upon his corduroy trousers. Mr Snelling, having given his orders, had immediately retired. He returned to the kitchen, and there, planting an armchair in the middle of the floor, sat down in it and waited to deal out justice.

'Well—ah—Willyum,' he began, as the boy entered, 'how came you to do this damage to Mr Vale's little boy?'

'It wasn't me, Mr Snelling,' returned William.

'We'll see about that by-and-by,' said Mr Snelling, sternly ponderous and wise, a spectacle to strike a guilty boy with awe. A spectacle, perhaps, to strike an innocent boy with a sense of exasperation.

'Let the lad tell how it happened, Robert,' said the farmer.

Mr Snelling gave a wordless wave of his right arm, as if to say, 'Leave an open road for Justice and for Wisdom, and leave this boy to me.'

'How came you, sir, to do this act of wicked damage?' he asked.

'Mr Vale,' said the boy, turning to the farmer, 'I'll tell you all about how it happened'—

'And no lies, mind,' interrupted Mr Snelling. 'A lie's always found out, and it'll make it a great deal worse for you.—So now, go on.'

The bulldog boy looked at him rebelliously. Perhaps he may have thought on what altered lines he would conduct the conversation if he were as big as Snelling.

'Ever since we've gone to school to Barfield,' he began again, addressing himself naturally to Vale, and not to the brow-beating injustice in the armchair, 'we've always had a fight in the morning with some of the Barfield boys on Scott's Hills. We couldn't pass without, and so we've always had a fight with 'em.'

'What do you mean,' Snelling demanded, 'by saying?'

'There was a new boy there last Thursday'—the lad went on; but Snelling stopped him with a sonorous 'Wait there.'

The boy waited, regarding him with a rebellious eye and a lowering face. He had begun to glow with his story, and would have made it all clear in a moment, and he had been full of honest and tender self-accusation.

'You're talking to your elders, you are,' said Snelling. 'You're not talking to a parcel of children as are ready to believe anything. What do you mean by saying that you couldn't pass to Barfield without having a fight in the morning?'

'We might have passed,' the boy answered, 'if we had taken the cowardly blow and gone round

by the church. But that's a mile out of the way, and we didn't mean to take the cowardly blow.'

'You mean,' said Mr Snelling, 'as you provoked the fight?'

'We didn't provoke the fight,' cried the boy in hot resentment.

'How dare you take that tone with your elders, sir?' asked Snelling. 'Is that the way your father brings you up?'

'Come, come, Robert,' said the mild farmer; 'have a bit of patience with the lad.—Tell your tale, William; and then if there's any questions to be asked, me and Mr Snelling'll put 'em afterwards.'

'John,' returned Mr Snelling, with almost as solemn an air of superior age and size as he employed to the boy himself, 'you're wanting in firmness. Leave him to me. I'll get the truth out of him, never fear.' He laid his hands upon his knees and leaned a little forward, as if he were just beginning to take trouble in the matter. —'Now, William Gregg, go on, and let us have no more prevarication.'

But William Gregg was not disposed to go on, having been brow-beaten beyond the necessary, according to his way of thinking. All the self-accusation and all the tender remorseful feeling had gone out of him, and in his own fashion he could be as obstinate as Snelling himself. There is no saying what might have come of the conflict, for just when the boy's silence was growing noticeable, the doctor came down-stairs, and caused a diversion.

'I hope the lad's come by no real mischief, doctor?' said Snelling, turning upon him.

The doctor was a pale man with puffy eyelids, and looked as if he spent his nights in tears. It was no part of his professional scheme to lessen the importance of his own services by making too light of a case, and he shook his head with so mournful and despondent an air that the farmer took fright at him.

'Come, come, Dr Haycock,' said Vale; 'it is to be hoped it isn't as bad as that comes to.'

The doctor did not say how bad it was, but he shook his head again and looked deeply serious. At this young Gregg was seized with new terrors, to which he hardly dared to give a name.

Snelling rose from his seat, and laying his two great hands on the topmost rail of the chair, bent above the doctor. 'Mr Vale,' he said, in his deliberate deep voice, with its note of swift decision here and there, 'is not a man as needs be trifled with, nor a man as fears to know the truth. You can tell us what to look for, doctor, and we are men as can endure it.'

'It's no part of my business,' answered the doctor, 'to cast down your spirits; and it is too early, gentlemen, to pronounce a decided opinion. But I am free to tell you that I don't like the look of things. We shall know more in a little while. I will drive over this evening.'

'You'll take a glass of ale afore you go, doctor?' asked Vale. He asked less out of his home-bred country hospitality than because he seemed to cling to the doctor in his own mind, and would fain have delayed him if he could, all day.

'Well,' said the doctor lingeringly—'yes; I will take a glass of ale.' He was as mournful over that as he was over the boy's condition, and he drank the ale when it came with a griev-

ing relish, as rustic mourners take their port or sherry at a funeral. 'I will drive over again this evening,' he said as he shook hands.

William Gregg had slipped away, and when Snelling looked round for him to renew his bullying catechism, the boy was not to be seen. He was very strong and undemonstrative by nature; but he had been already frightened into a storm of grief that morning, and the doctor's words and manner struck him with a new terror, so that he could not control his tears. He would rather any day have taken a flogging than have been caught crying, and so he stole away and hid himself in a barn, and there had his second burst of grief and fear all to himself.

Grief and fear were not all that filled his mind, for a bitter sense of injustice mingled with them. He knew he would have fought until he could fight no longer to save his chum from harm, and his heart so revolted at the cowardice and treachery which had done this mischief, that to find the mischief charged upon himself was a double wrong, and altogether insupportable. He hated Snelling with as much passion as his grief left room for; but he was helpless under the injustice put upon him.

There are some men, but not many, who take the trouble to realise for themselves what children think and feel. Mr Robert Snelling was certainly not one of them, and he would have cared very little, even if he had known of the tempest he had raised. If a creature as big as the side of a house had domineered over him, had jeered him, brow-beaten him, charged him without an atom of evidence with crimes impossible to his nature, and left him without the possibility of redress or vengeance, it would have been a different thing altogether. But a boy? What does it matter what you say to a boy? What does it matter what a boy thinks, or what he fancies himself to suffer? Things would have come to a pretty pass, surely, in his estimation, if a man of middle age might not say what he pleased to a boy.

Young Gregg had sobbed and fought himself into quiet, when the farmer, wandering uneasily hither and thither, strolled into the barn and found him. The lad stood up sullenly, prepared for fresh injustice, and steeling his heart against it. But the farmer, laying a kindly hand on his shoulder, simply asked him: 'Tell us how it happened, William.'

So William told the whole story straightforwardly and simply; and the farmer, ordering the mare to be harnessed anew, drove off with him to discover and identify the guilty author of the damage.

'You oughtn't to have had any truck with them rough lads, William,' he said, as they drove away.

'We couldn't help it, sir,' said William. 'They wouldn't let us go by without a fight.'

The farmer sighed; but he remembered his own boyhood. He was a very mild man indeed, and he had been mild as a boy; but he knew that he would have fought for his right of way, if it had been disputed.

'The proper way would have been for you to ha' told your father, and for John to ha' told me,' he answered. 'We should ha' put an end to it directly.—But now, you see what comes

of fighting and taking your own cause if your own hands afore you're old enough to be wise, my lad.'

The extreme gentleness of this rebuke broke William Gregg anew, and he sobbed all the rest of the way.

TERM BEGINS AGAIN.

THE month of holiday, so eagerly longed for, has come and gone; the fellows return to-day. Newspapers and circulars have informed the world that 'the above College will resume its duties on January 21st;' or some more briefly make it known thus: 'The Spring Term commences Jan. 21st.' In fact, in these days of hurry, the latter style receives more general favour, and but few find time to add D.V., to catch the eye and heart of parents of a pious turn of mind.

This morning the College governor and chaplain came smiling into breakfast. 'Well, the vacation is over, and the day is fine for travelling.' His good lady, pouring out the steaming coffee, hopes the boys will take care of themselves, and not start the term with bad colds and require nursing directly they get back.

At the lodge gates, the same programme was gone through an hour since: the porter and 'general factotum' informs his 'missus' that 'the vacation is over,' and not very pleasantly either, as it means the unloading and hauling about of scores of boxes heavy with books, jam-pots, boots, skates, and other weighty material. The kitchen-maid informs the milkman that 'the boys is comin' in to-day, and cook says he must bring ten gallons to-morrow morning.' The butcher and baker receive similar announcements and enlarged orders; they in their turn fail not to tell their numerous acquaintances at the back-doors in every street in the town that 'the College young gentlemen come back to-day.'

However the world puts this important matter, the result is the same: by eleven o'clock to-night, two hundred and fifty beds that were empty last night will hold a tenant. There stand the beds in the moonlight—two long rows in No. 4, each bed with a dark knob at the head, and a figure extended therefrom or coiled up by the pillow. By this time every boy has dropped off to sleep; the loud breathing and occasional cough are the only sounds to be heard, except when that new boy in the corner turns over in his dream. Poor boy: he had a small 'weep' before he fell asleep. Last night he was in the little room at home, his box was packed and lying at the foot of the bed, but to-night his bed is empty and the box gone. The mother cannot pass his room to-night without going in to convince herself that he is not there. His bed is painfully empty. Sadly she passes out, and closes the door behind her, not without a prayer and a tear. This small tragedy is being acted all over the country; untenanted beds strew the land, and fond mothers weep over them.

But we have brought the fellows back to College in somewhat of a hurry; we need hardly say that boys do not usually fly from the small bedroom at home to the big dormitory at College. A melancholy breakfast is followed by sad farewells; railway tickets, labels, porters, and cabmen

to be negotiated, and a dozen other matters must be attended to before nightfall.

In the matter of going home, boys are universally agreed that the earliest trains are infinitely the best. Although two hours of wearisome travelling might be spared by choosing a late fast train, he is no ordinary schoolboy who can calmly sit down and wait while his chums are starting at 6.45 A.M. In the matter of returning, on the contrary, there is considerable diversity of opinion.

The first arrival makes his appearance soon after breakfast. If he isn't a new boy—for new boys usually are in a hurry to see what College is like—it is easy to fix him down to be one of a certain half-dozen. There is a type of boy that always returns at this early period of the morning, either because he is very sick of home and holidays, or because he wishes to secure the most comfortable bed in No. 6 bedroom, and the best of everything else that others might particularly like to have. He is by no means a desirable character. When his early raids have terminated, his time is spent very enjoyably in quizzing the new boys as they arrive, and laughing boisterously at anything that doesn't suit his limited notions of propriety. He never fails to inquire after the grub-box, to ask the names of the new-comer's sisters and the amount of pocket-money he has brought.

There is another type of boy that invariably comes back several days late: nothing would induce him to come up to time. He is a jolly, careless, and foolish fellow, caring nothing for position in class or loss of time and knowledge. The fellows say that he tells his parents the wrong date in order to escape the examination in holiday-work which takes place on the first day; but it is more probable that the parents are as indifferent as the sons, and keep them at home merely because they wish it. Such parents become rarer year by year; not only do they send their sons on the right day, but even grumble because the holidays are so long.

The traffic on the College drive is greatest between three o'clock and seven. There they come. A huge 'bus-load slowly winds its way from the big gates up the grounds to the front of the building, its top covered with figures moving about under mortar boards. It is just a month since they passed through the same gateway shouting and hurrahing, rousing the neighbourhood with *Dulce Domum* and *Auld Lang Syne*. The return is not so jubilant and noisy; yet there is plenty of excitement, and seemingly nothing of that melancholy which is supposed to seize upon the British schoolboy and play such havoc with him in the shape of homesickness. Anything that affects the feelings of a representative schoolboy ought to be hailed with delight; he is not over-tender; at least we mustn't expect to find any symptoms of it on the top of a 'bus. Possibly he gave way to it for a short while when he first started this morning. Having waved his hand to the figures on the platform until a signal-box intercepted the view, he sat down in a corner of the carriage quite still, and gazed into space as well as he could through a big bead which would insist on filling each eye. How long he would have remained in this thoughtful attitude it is useless to attempt to decide;

perhaps it is as well that Brooks and his brother interrupted the solemnity of the occasion by entering the carriage at the next station and shaking him vigorously by the hand, more commonly styled the paw or the flipper. The schoolboys' train is often like the river—it gathers volume at different junctions as it proceeds, and finally discharges its contents on the desired platform.

The well-known faces turn up one after the other, and no time is left for melancholy reflection. Matters of vital importance have to be discussed. Robinson isn't coming back, so that there will be another vacancy in the Football Fifteen. How many new masters are there? Is Dumps returning, or did the Doctor give him the sack? When there is an idle moment left, there is opportunity for a private cogitation on an all-important question—the pocket-money. Even when one is old enough to have forgotten that he ever wore knickerbockers, five shillings extra will cover any amount of doleful feelings. It had been a matter of speculation all the holidays as to 'how much the Pater would tip up,' so that to have one's highest anticipations beaten by five shillings left no room for other than feelings of congratulation. In fact, the homesick boy has become a *rara avis*. But when you do catch him shedding a quiet tear in a corner of the playground, he is an affectionate, sympathetic, little fellow of the right sort, lamenting the absence of something more lasting and satisfying than cake and jam.

The ordinary schoolboy, who gets infinite enjoyment out of kicking inflated leather about, and in the very 'feel' of a bat, has more real enjoyment at College than at home, because he always has at hand the necessary paraphernalia and companions, without having to hunt all over the town to raise a side; also, the restraints of home-life, which are often more irksome than those of school-life, are removed. Notwithstanding this, it is hardly necessary to say that holidays will always be appreciated, because they are a change from the routine of the Term. In the same way, many of us who are older and prefer the quiet of home-life, start off in July with light hearts for six weeks' more or less wearisome travelling, and often wish ourselves back again.

School can no longer be called a jail; the hours of confinement are made just long enough to cause the playtime to be appreciated; in fact, there is a feeling prevalent that school is made far too easy a matter for the better classes. 'A liberal diet' is also an actuality, and finds its place on every prospectus along with 'no corporal punishment.' Certainly, this is not prison life and fare.

Here comes the last load up the drive. No prison van this. Now they stop. Down the fellows tumble on to the College steps, and are lost to sight in the open doorway under the clock-tower, chatting and laughing all the time. In they go! The Rubicon is crossed, and Term has begun once more.

That open doorway, that hole under the clock at the foot of the tower, has a sort of fascination about it; it reminds one of the hole in front of a beehive where the bees pass in and out; or in some vague way of the hole in the hillside into which the 'Pied Piper' led the children of Hamelin. But first and foremost it brings before our eyes one's own particular portal, through

which we were wont to pass and repass during those years at College. Do we not still remember how, when standing in its shadow for the first time, we nearly broke our young neck in staring up the face of the tower as Father pulled the big bell-handle at its base to gain admittance. What a height it appeared—hundreds of feet! From that time it gradually got smaller and smaller as our youthful vision expanded, until we found out it was only ninety feet, and that the hands of the clock were not a quarter of a mile, as we at first supposed.

We had equally magnified notions of the learning of this august building, that were by no means lessened when we tried to decipher the Latin motto cut in the stone above the entrance. But we were admitted in spite of our fears and the grim monsters that glared down on us with stony eyes from every convenient corner of this Gothic pile. We cannot say that we wish for a return of those days; in the main we are well contented with our present lot. But it is possible that on one day in the three hundred and sixty-five, when we are dropping in for more kicks than halfpence, we might wish to stand once more in the College entrance-hall in big collar and knickers with two boxes containing all the necessary property of life—a clothes-box and a grub-box; blest also with an innocent mind and a strong digestion; in short, able to sit on one's boxes and have the satisfaction of knowing that under one's hat are all things necessary to command success and happiness for the next three months at least.

JEREMY YORK.

A STORY OF OLD DEAL.*

BY W. CLARK RUSSELL,

Author of the *Wreck of the Grosvenor*, etc.

I.

A LIGHT westerly wind had crowded the spacious waters of the Downs with anchored vessels. The colour, the apparel, the quaint bravery of the ships and mariners of the last century, made a noble and sparkling show of the marine pageant. The hour was a little before sundown, and the gush of warm red glory past the giant headland went in a tincture of dark gold to the zenith, and thence pale as amber to the eastern sea-line, with a hot crimson head of cloud here and there vaguely defined upon the delicate radiance, whilst the horizon ran with a line as clear as though scored with the sweep of the leg of a pair of compasses.

It was an evening in the month of September. There were scarce fewer than three hundred sail of vessels gently straining at their hemp cables to the easterly set of the water. They had come together as if by magic, for that morning the historic tract of waters had steeped bare to the white terraces of the Forelands; whilst now the

* The tradition upon which the following narrative is founded, although above a hundred and thirty years old, is still current in the South Foreland district. It is briefly referred to in several of the local guide-books and histories.

multitudinous shipping showed like a forest upon the sea, gay with fluttering pennons, delicate as a bit of pencilling with the wondrous intricacies of the rigging, brilliant with the red sheen of the waning luminary upon glass and brass; upon the writhing of gilt-work upon quarter-galleries and castellated sterns; upon innumerable figure-heads of fantastic device; upon yellow spars where the expiring flames in the west trembled in veins of burnished brass.

An old-world scene of this kind is not to be matched nowadays. The iron craft has entered the soul of the marine, and all is dull, flat, prosaic. Ships of fifty fashions filled the Downs that evening. There was the towering three-decker, grand as a palace abaft, with handsome galleries and spacious windows trembling to the lustre that rose to them from off the running water, the red coats of marines dotting the white lines that crowned her adamantine defences, shrouds as thick as cables soaring to huge round tops, from which, higher and higher yet, rose topmast and topgallant-mast and royal-mast into miracles of airy delicacy, from whose central spire languidly floated the pennon of the ship of the state. There was the East Indiaman outward bound, newly brought up, scarcely less regal in her way than the first-rate, with John Company's house-flag at the main under the dog-vane that glanced like a streak of fire to the raining of the splendour beyond the line of coast, the red flag at her peak, the grinning lips of cannon along her sides, the glitter of uniforms upon her quarter-deck, and rows of lively hearties aloft upon her topsail yards snugging the spaces of white cloths into lines of snow. There were the little bilander bound to the Mediterranean, rigged with a long lateen yard upon her mainmast; the high-sterned pink; the round-bowed sturdy snow; the galley of a hundred and fifty tons, whose long low hull, with ports for sweeps, gave her a most piratical look, with a malignant fancy to follow on of a breathless calm and a stagnated vessel, towards which this same galley is impelled by her huge oars, as though she were some vast deadly marine insect subtly though swiftly stirring to the impulse of its antennæ.

The scene was full of light and life. Standing on Deal beach, so quiet was everything ashore, so still this hour of sundown, you would have heard a blending of innumerable sounds softened into music by distance—the strains of fiddles in the nearer craft, the voices of men singing, the pleasant noise of bells, the clank and rattle of winches and capstans and windlasses, the chorusing of lungs of leather stowing the canvas, the shrill chirpings of boatswains' whistles. Then on a sudden broke the sudden harsh thunder of a gun from the line-of-battle ship. It was instantly followed by the graceful drooping of the many-coloured bunting to right and left, denoting the hour of sunset; and now masthead and gaff-end showed bare of the bunting that had but a little before made the mass of shipping appear like a floating city of banners; and high above the congregation of masts the towering fabric of the three-decker loomed grim and forbidding upon the darkness of the evening stealthily creeping like some dark curl of breeze out of the east.

II.

Whilst the sullen explosion of the gun was echoing along the Sandwich plains, a large, exceedingly handsome brig, that had been quietly pushing her way into the heart of the shipping, helped rather by the tide than by the faint fannings aloft, hauled up her courses and let go all halliards; and a minute after, her anchor fell from the cathead and she swung quietly to the drag of her cable. She was from down Channel, a homeward-bounder: but those were the ambling days of trade; no fuss was made over what we now call prompt despatch. It was merely a question of how the wind sat; and a six weeks' detention in the Downs was accepted as a commonplace incident in a voyage from the Thames to foreign parts.

A few minutes after the brig's anchor had been let go, a signal was made to the shore for a boat. The twilight was yet abroad; the line of the land dark against the rusty crimson of the west; the flag was to be readily descried, and there was a fluttering of air still to make a conspicuous thing of the bunting amid the congregation of colourless spars and masts, amid which, here and there, you already saw the twinkling of a cabin-lamp or of a lantern swinging pendulum-like from the fore-stay.

A tall young fellow of some three or four and twenty years of age stood in the gangway of the brig, impatiently gazing shorewards. He was distinctly handsome, spite of a certain haggardness and hollowness that seemed to betoken a considerable spell of illness. His eyes were large, dark, and lustrous, full of intelligence, and, as one should say, of softness also. He stood a little above six feet, but with the stoop of a man who had not yet been able to stiffen himself out of a long term of prostrating sickness. His hair was long and abundant and curled plentifully upon his shoulders and back: an oddity in him, to engage at least a shore-going eye, accustomed to the perukes and bags and 'tyes' of the streets. He was habited plainly in a coat with vast cuffs and pockets and metal buttons, crimson breeches, coarse gray stockings, and shovel-shaped shoes heavy with large plate buckles. His hat was a three-cornered affair, and from time to time he fanned his face with it, whilst he continued to watch steadfastly and anxiously the approach of a boat from Deal beach.

'Here comes something that looks like a punt, at last, Mr York,' exclaimed the skipper of the brig, approaching him—a broad-beamed, bullet-headed bit of a man, standing on oval shanks and carrying a face as red as the flag he sailed under. 'Hope you'll pick up ashore, I do. Remember my words—if you feel able to ship along with me by the time I am ready to sail, and that's giving you from now to December, why, all that I can say is, there's a berth ready for you.'

'I am heartily obliged to you, sir, for the offer,' said the other; 'and I thank you from the depths of my soul for the kindness you've done me.—Indeed, Captain Settle, I shall never forget you; and if I am equal to going a-sailing again by December, you may reckon me already, sir, as upon the ship's articles.'

They continued exchanging compliments after this pattern whilst the boat approached; presently

it was alongside, and the tall young fellow whom the captain had addressed as Mr York prepared to descend.

'I shall endeavour to be in London the week after next,' he exclaimed as he swung a moment by the man-ropes; 'and I trust, captain, you'll not forget to put in a good word for me with the owners of the *Celia*. It will be a matter of twenty-eight pounds to me, who am now in a condition to view even a sixpence as a very serious thing.'

'Trust me, trust me, Mr York,' the captain exclaimed with a cheery wave of his hand.

The tall young fellow, named Jeremy York, lowered himself into the boat; a small bundle—apparently all the luggage he had—was handed down to him by the skipper; he flourished his hat; the crew of the brig, some of whom were at work upon the fore-castle and some aloft, gave him a cheer; and in a moment or two he was being swept shorewards by the vigorous arms of a brace of Deal boatmen.

It was now dark; the western hectic was gone, the stars floated in a showering of brilliant points to the liquid dusk, that hung glimmerless above the horizon, with here and there a round-browed cloud with a sheen upon it like the head of a snow-clad rise to obscure a narrow space of the sparkling dome. The Foreland soared wan and massive from the white wash of the water at its base, then swept darkly to the flat land upon which were grouped the houses of the town of Deal, whose foreshore at this moment winked with its row of oil lamps, or a dim illumination in places of small lozenge-paved windows, and a brighter streak of light striking through an open door. High and dry upon the shingle rested groups of boats; and at intervals, as York approached the beach, he would catch a noise like to a rush of water upon shingle, and mark some little fabric newly launched, swiftly making off on a small buccaneering cruise of its own amongst the shipping, or maybe to intercept some shadow hovering past the Godwins with her hold full of silks, tobacco, tea, and spirits, to be 'run' before the morning, and under the noses, too, of the lookout aboard the first-rate, and the revenue people, trudging, solitary and austere, along the tall cliffs' edge or the long low line of beach.

'Many people in Deal just now?' York inquired of one of the boatmen.

'Town choke full, o' allow,' was the answer. 'Take them there ships,' with a nod in the star-light towards the phantasmal huddle over the stern of the boat: 'one person from each craft 'ud be more'n enough to overflow us, and you'd say that one-third of every ship's company out yonder had come ashore.'

'A bother!' cried the young fellow, a little petulantly; 'small prospect of my hiring a bed, if it be as you say.—D'ye think there's a chance of my getting a night's rest in your town?'

'Whoy not?' answered the other boatman gruffly. 'Ye're a seafaring man beloike, and there ought to be more'n one soft plank proper for sailor's bones to be found vacant at Deal.'

'No planking it for me, not if there's a mattress to be hired!' cried York. 'Suffer such a fever as has kept me wasting for six months in Valparaiso, and you'll wish your skeleton marrowless, that it might give over aching.'

'There are inns enough, anyway,' said one of the men. 'Troy Mother Puddell's first. She keeps the sign of the *Cat o' Nine Tails*, Sandown way. There should be a chance there; and o'll tell ye whoy: her liquor's cust bad. She's bekknown for *that*, 'soides high tarms. 'Tain't that I name her 'cause I love her; but when a sick gent wants a bed, he ain't going to be hindered by a shilling too much, let alone a quality o' liquor there's no call for him to drink.'

As the man spoke, the boat's keel grounded on the shingle, and the little craft swept broadside to the beach. York, picking up his bundle, stepped out, and inquired the fare. The boatmen demanded six shillings.

'See here,' said he, pulling out a half-guinea piece, 'this is all the money I possess, and I shall have no more until I can beg, borrow, or steal it. If I deduct six shillings from this, what does it leave me?'

'Give us foive,' said the men.

'Three,' he answered; 'for God's sake, don't take advantage of a sick sailor!'

An altercation followed; York was resolved, the boatmen importunate and clamorous, and presently offensive. Other boatmen were attracted by the noise, and soon there was a crowd of Deal men listening to the shouts of their two brethren and the cold determined remonstrances of Mr Jeremy York.

At last the tall young fellow cried out, 'Make it four shillings, then, and you shall be paid.' The others agreed; the half-guinea was changed into silver; and York walked away, followed curiously by the eyes of the group of men who had assembled.

'Tall enough for a Maypole,' said one of them.

'What's his sect?' exclaimed another. 'Looks as if his hair grewed from a woman's head.'

'Smite me,' cried one of the two boatmen who had pulled the young fellow ashore, 'if ever I takes a job again without first agreeing with the party as to tarms. A dirty four shillin'! But what's a man to dew? He outs with his half-guinea piece, and says 'tis all the money he's got in the world; and who's to know that it ain't a forged bit tew? But that's Billy Tucker's consarn, who's got the coin.' He spat with disgust and lurched off, on which the group broke up, and made in several detachments for the various public-houses or inns in Beach Street.

'SPOT' AND 'FUTURES.'

THE extent to which speculative business is carried on in the modern world of commerce is vastly greater than most people are aware of. It is not only that there is speculation in every business, but speculation has become a business of itself—fully organised, equipped, and certificated. In this country, of course, we are apt to imagine that the great centre of speculation is the Stock Exchange. Doubtless it is the greatest centre; but there are other arenas in which speculation at times is greater than that in stocks. Of course it is erroneous to attempt to measure the extent of speculation in public securities by the amount of the turn-over in the Stock Exchange Clearing-house, because a very large proportion of the transactions there recorded are *bond-fide* exchanges—that is, sales and purchases—of investments. But the

Stock Exchange nevertheless remains in this country the most striking example of a place where a man may buy what he does not want, and sell what he has not got, on the chance of something turning up in his favour.

There are other departments of traffic in this country where men do the same thing, but in which, nevertheless, some tangible evidence of the article dealt in is called for. There are, for instance, in the pig-iron and petroleum markets a great many turnings-over of 'warrants' before settling-day arrives; but at last the 'warrants' must be produced by somebody, and taken by somebody else—the intermediaries merely taking or paying the differences on their respective operations. This is because in these trades the speculation is chiefly in that which is actually existing in public stores, for which the store-keepers grant receipts or warrants. These documents are, in ordinary circumstances, as readily convertible into cash as bank-notes, although at a discount, and are used as securities in obtaining money on loan.

In petroleum, as also in cotton and some other commodities, the speculation is often in 'forward' rather than in 'prompt' deliveries, or, to use the trade terms, 'Futures' and 'Spot.'

But to illustrate the operation of 'Future' and 'Spot' dealings in speculative circles, we need to take wheat. This is, next to stocks and shares, probably the object of the largest amount of speculation in the United States; and we are not sure that the operations in the wheat 'pits' are not sometimes larger than those in Wall Street in respect of the total amount of money involved. The whole annual crop of wheat in the United States averages over four hundred millions of bushels; but when speculation is brisk, more than that quantity will be bought and sold in a single market in one week.

There are three great markets for wheat in the United States—New York, Chicago, and Duluth (Minnesota). The last named is the youngest of the three, but is growing so rapidly in importance, that it is said to do as much business now as Chicago. In each of these places there is a Corn Exchange, managed by a 'Board of Trade,' and in each is a 'pit,' or amphitheatre, in which speculators gather for their peculiar operations. If a man wants to buy 'Spot' wheat—that is to say, wheat for immediate delivery for shipment, or for other purposes of legitimate trade—he goes to the Exchange, where the stands of the dealers are arranged in much the same way as in our own corn-markets. There he 'makes his deal,' and on obtaining an order on the 'elevator' for the quantity he requires, must be prepared to hand over cash in return. It is a maxim in America that 'Corn is cash;' and this maxim is supposed to be adhered to both in ordinary and in speculative dealing. Again, a man who has grain stored in the 'elevator,' merely takes his store-receipt or warrant to a dealer or broker, and obtains for it cash on the basis of the 'Spot' price of the day. He may, of course, give a limit to his broker below which he is not to sell; and if so, must wait until the 'Spot' price reaches his figure.

An elevator, it must be explained, is a public warehouse in which is stored all the grain as it comes in from the country. All wheat in America is 'graded'—that is, classified according

to quality, such as Nos. 1, 2, and 3, Spring or Winter, in Chicago; or Nos. 1 or 2, Hard Spring, or Hard Northern, in Duluth. There are many different grades; but for purposes of speculation, 'No. 2 Spring' is used chiefly in Chicago, 'No. 1 Hard Spring' in Duluth, and 'No. 2 Spring or Winter,' in seller's option, in New York.

When a farmer or dealer sends grain to an elevator, it is inspected by duly appointed officials, declared of such and such a grade, and a receipt is granted for the ascertained quantity of the declared grade. The wheat is then stored, not by itself, but in a mass with thousands of other consignments, all duly graded, so that a man never gets his own wheat out again. He merely gets the same quantity as he delivered of the particular grade.

Such a system of grading is not possible in any other country in the world but America—unless, perhaps, to a certain extent in Russia—for this reason: in America there are vast tracts of land all producing the same quality of grain. There is the 'Spring Wheat belt,' and the 'Winter Wheat belt,' and so on, phrases which indicate certain areas of country all producing the same quality. Now in this country, from climatic differences and varying mixtures of soil, there may not be two farms in one parish yielding exactly the same quality of grain; nay, on a single farm, each field may be different. A Scotch or an English farmer simply could not understand the process by which wheat is graded in America, because it is so entirely contrary to his own experience. But it is this peculiarity of American grain-growing that has enabled the business to be reduced to such a perfect system. 'No. 1 Spring Wheat,' or any other official designation, represents a fixed definite quality, which every one in the trade understands. Therefore, people buy and sell not by sample, but by grades; and all that a buyer has to do is to see that the seller gives him an order on the elevator for the particular grade he has bought.

It is this perfect system of inspection and classification that has really created the enormous speculative business in American wheat. There could not be this speculation without official recognised standards; and such standards, as we have said, are attainable in America. The grading, it must be explained, depends on the district. 'Chicago Wheat,' of whatever number, means the wheat grown in the neighbourhood of Chicago. 'Duluth' or 'Northern' wheat means the wheat grown north of a certain line; and so on. But we do not need to go into all the intricacies of grades, so long as the reader thoroughly grasps the principle of grading upon which all speculation is based.

As a matter of fact, only a small minority of those who frequent the 'pits' in Chicago and New York know anything whatever about actual quality. They have all the grades in their market relations at their finger-ends; but if put to the test, many of them would hardly be able to distinguish a sample of wheat from one of barley. They do not really trade in the grain; they neither want it nor have it to give; all they do is to buy or sell certain market chances based upon possible contingencies or probable eventualities.

Wheat speculation is confined to 'Futures' or, to use the American term, 'Options;' and to simplify our explanations we will suppose Chicago to be the scene of operations. There are other 'pits' in Chicago besides the wheat-pit, where analogous speculations are carried on; but wheat is probably the biggest medium for gambling. The form is in 'Futures' or 'Options,' and the nominal material 'No. 2 Spring Chicago.'

Let us assume, for the moment, that you want to have a speculation in Chicago wheat. You take up an official list—all prices for the day are finally 'called' at three o'clock in the afternoon by the 'Board of Trade,' and marked on the call-board, as the authoritative and inevitable bases of settlements—and you there find quotations such as these, which we take from an actual list in November 1888, prefixing first a market report:

'Wheat commenced weak at a fall of $\frac{3}{8}$ c., but afterwards rallied smartly, and developed decided strength on vigorous operations for a reaction, and "bears" buying to cover. Values [prices?] thereupon considerably improved, and after a heavy business, the close is firm at an advance of $\frac{1}{8}$ c. to $\frac{3}{8}$ c. Sales 10,800,000 bushels. Nothing doing in "Spot."

Then follow the official closing quotations for the day—these figures being cents per bushel of 60 lbs.:

November.....105 $\frac{3}{4}$	February.....109 $\frac{1}{4}$
December.....105 $\frac{7}{8}$	March.....110 $\frac{1}{8}$
January.....107 $\frac{3}{4}$	May.....113 $\frac{3}{4}$

Perhaps you are struck with the remarkable disparity between November-December and May prices, and you think that the latter are in the circumstances too high. In that case, you may go to a broker and say: 'Sell for me in the morning 5000 bushels' (which is a moderate 'deal') 'of May wheat at 113 $\frac{3}{4}$,' or any other figure you like to place as a limit. In the morning the broker goes to 'the pit' and calls out: 'I sell 5 May 13 $\frac{3}{4}$;' and another broker holds up his hand and says: 'I buy.' Each notes the transaction on his card, and sends it in to the managing Board. Your broker then sends you intimation of what he has done, and the bargain is completed. If you do this in November, you have five intervening months in which to take the chance of the market. During these months, 'May wheat' may never come near the price at which you sold; if not, you have still all May, upon any one day in which month you may buy to cover yourself and tender to your buyer. But you will not do anything of the sort in reality; for you will simply on some suitable day arrange to close the transaction at the official closing quotation for 'May wheat' and pocket or pay the difference. You will never see any wheat, and you will not pay a cent for real wheat, but merely pay or receive the difference between the price at which you sold an imaginary article and at which you are supposed to buy another imaginary article.

This is a simple operation in 'Futures' or 'Options;' but other dealings are more complicated. Suppose, for instance, you think that 'December' wheat seems quoted too cheap in comparison with 'January,' and that the former ought to rise to something like the level of the latter. You give an order, in November, to buy, say, 5000

bushels 'December wheat' at quoted rate. But if on the very first day of that month the seller chooses to tender what you have bought, you must either pay him cash for the quantity of wheat, and receive an elevator receipt for it—thus turning your speculation in 'Futures' to one in 'Spot'—or else pay him the difference between your purchase price and the official price at three o'clock. If you have not done one of these two things by three o'clock, you are treated as a defaulter. It is noteworthy that while a seller is not supposed to compel a buyer to take the actual goods, a buyer can always demand the goods rather than the difference. In practice, however, dealers in 'the pit' neither want to give nor to take the actual wheat, and, in fact, there is not available wheat in existence sometimes to represent the transactions of a single day.

To return to your 'December' operation, however. If your calculations are upset in the manner suggested, you pay your difference and buy another lot, and so on as long as you choose, or as your purse can hold out, until the turn comes in your favour. For dealings in 'Futures,' it will thus be seen that the further you can operate ahead the more scope you have to 'make a spoon or spoil a horn.' Of course, the actual price of wheat in May, when the month arrives, may be very different from the price at which 'Futures' for that month are dealt in to-day. Again, a man of capital who sells 'Futures' at long prices may, rather than stand the racket of the market, buy 'Spot' to an equivalent extent, lock up the warrants in his safe, and keep them until he can tender them in implement of his sales. His costs in this case are the interest on his money and the elevator charges for storing.

It sometimes happens that the price of 'Futures' is lower in New York than it is in Chicago, although to bring to the former place means something like a thousand miles of railway carriage. This condition is, of course, abnormal and purely due to the momentary course of speculation. On the date of the quotations given above, New York was from $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 cent cheaper than Chicago; while west of Chicago, in the smaller towns, the price was as much dearer. This meant that the farmers were 'strong,' and were speculating for a further advance. It is when these differences in the markets occur that 'straddling' begins. A 'straddler' is a man who buys in one market and sells in another. Thus, if the price of New York 'Januaries' is lower than in Chicago, he buys in the one place and sells in the other at the same moment. He cannot, of course, deliver New York wheat to his Chicago buyer; but he continues to manipulate his transactions in both 'pits' until he can work out a project—or the reverse; for 'straddlers' often come to grief, as a very big specimen of the tribe did just before these lines were penned.

There is another kind of dealing in 'Futures'—that by the Western farmers. A farmer has his crop ready for market, say, in the month of December; but he sees then that December wheat is quoted in Chicago only 105 or 106 cents, while 'May' is quoted 113 or 114. So, instead of sending forward his wheat, he puts it in his barns, and sends an order to a broker to sell for him so much such a grade for 'May' at

113½, or whatever limit he chooses to place. When this is done, he really has obtained seven or eight cents per bushel more for his crop than if he sold it at once; but he will not get the money till May, when he sends forward the wheat to the elevator and tenders delivery. It does not matter if the original buyer does not want it, and cannot pay for it; somebody else will buy the 'Spot' wheat, and the first buyer will pay the farmer the difference.

This mode of doing business is attended with this objection, that it offers too much temptation to the farmer to speculate. He may sell his 'Futures,' and still send forward his wheat to be converted into cash as 'Spot.' In this case he has no cover for his 'Future' sale, and stands just in the position of an outside speculator, while the money in hand may lead him into many extravagances. It is said that many of the Western farmers are extensive speculators in this way.

A curious case of sellers of 'Futures' or 'Options' being 'cornered'* occurred in Chicago recently, and as one example is worth pages of explanation, we will give the story.

Mr H— was long known as the 'Champion Scalper and Speculator' in the 'Board of Trade;' but outside Chicago his fame had not spread until he successfully 'ran' the 'closest and best managed corner' ever made in the United States. This gentleman had by 'scalping'—that is, manipulating the market for small profits—amassed a large amount of ready cash, always by 'operating against the crowd,' on the theory that 'the crowd' is always wrong. But in September, Mr H—, guided by some knowledge or instinct, took a novel course for him. He quietly bought all the wheat that was offered for that month, and ran the price of 'Septembers' to a premium above the succeeding months. 'The crowd,' tempted by this premium, kept on selling 'Septembers' freely, in the belief that by 'selling down' they would frighten him out and force him 'to part.' But 'old H—' went on buying all they offered until he had almost every dealer in the 'pit' on his books. Then one fine day near the end of the month he called in some of the sanguine sellers to his sanctum and showed that not only did he hold 7,000,000 bushels of 'September,' but that he had acquired the entire stock of 'No. 2' in Chicago—'Spot;' while the wheat that was coming forward was not of that grade, and would not be accepted in fulfilment of September sales.

This was his 'corner,' and very snug it was, although the speculators laughed at his offer to let them off at ten or fifteen cents difference. There was still a week to run—plenty of time to get wheat forward from the West, and otherwise to work the market. Express trains were put on to bring wheat from St Louis and other places, and bold speculators went on selling in the confidence of a final crash. H— bought it all; and then the New York 'straddlers' came in, tempted by the premium over their market, and sold more still. To stimulate them a little, Mr H— let the price fall away a cent or two, so as to give the impression that he had reached the end of his tether. But he bought back his own stuff through other brokers, and everything that was

offered, until—to make a long story short—on the last day of September he had the whole 'crowd' on their knees; and men who had scornfully rejected his former easy terms, had to pay him in the end something like a dollar per bushel of 'difference.' It is said that Mr H— cleared over two millions of dollars by this 'corner.' At anyrate, the incident illustrates the dangers which attend those who sell 'Options.'

On the other hand, speculators who have bought 'Options' to a large amount in order to make similar 'corners,' have been more often caught themselves, by either being unable to control the 'Spot' wheat, or by miscalculating the supplies to come forward, or through some other error or weakness. In short, the majority of speculations in wheat, as in everything else, turn out failures; and we remember once hearing it said by one who knows the place well, that in Chicago you cannot throw your boot out of a window without hitting a 'busted millionaire!'

Of course, this kind of speculative business is highly demoralising, and economically as well as ethically wrong. But whether the speculations of New York, Chicago, and Duluth really affect the price of wheat to the consumer in the long run, is very doubtful. At times they run up the price artificially; but there is always a corresponding relapse. 'Corners' can never be maintained for long, and when they are swept out, it is generally at a heavy sacrifice.

All the speculation of this kind in wheat, however, is not confined to residents in New York, Chicago, and Duluth. A great many Germans and French join in it by cable, as do also many Britons. Indeed, there are feeble copies in this country of the Chicago system. Liverpool has now a 'Futures' wheat market in which the standard for speculation is 'Californian No. 1 White Wheat.' The transactions in this are very large, but nothing like those of the American 'pits.' London has also formed a 'Futures' market, and has fixed a standard called 'London Wheat,' a term which is defined to mean 'Red Winter,' 'White Californian No. 1,' or 'Oregon Amber No. 1' (with the option of two or three other qualities at fixed differences). But the standard is too nondescript; and speculators will not go in freely to buy when they are not sure that they can sell in the open market that which they may be compelled to take in the 'Futures' market. Both Liverpool and London, in short, lack the perfect system of inspection and grading which is the very foundation and support of wheat speculation in America.

CURIOUS WAGERS.

It has been remarked that 'a collection of foolish wagers would make a voluminous work;' and so odd are some of these 'fools' arguments, as Butler pithily terms them in his *Hudibras*, that a selection of some of the most curious may prove not uninteresting.

During the last century, when, particularly in club-life, the least difference of opinion frequently ended in a bet, many remarkable and eccentric wagers were made. From Mrs Crackenthorpe, the Female Tatler of 1709, we learn that the fashionable young men of her day were quite as much at a loss how to kill time as are their modern compeers. Ridiculous wagers, generally

* For explanation of 'Corners' see *Chambers's Journal*, No. 19, vol. 1, Fifth Series.

governed by whim and extreme folly, were frequent. She tells us: 'Four worthy senators lately threw their hats into a river, laid a crown whose hat should swim first to the mill, and ran hallooing after them; and he that won the prize was in a greater rapture than if he had carried the most dangerous point in parliament.'

One Sunday in June 1765, a wager of one thousand guineas was decided between two noblemen, one of whom had constructed a machine which was to propel a boat at the rate of twenty-five miles an hour. A canal was prepared near the banks of the Thames for that purpose; but, by some fatality, the tackle breaking, the wager was lost.

Men of note, however, not content with representatives, have been known to wager upon their own individual prowess in the water. It is recorded of Sir John Pakington, called 'Trusty Pakington' (Queen Elizabeth called him 'her Temperance'), that 'he entered into articles to swim against three noble courtiers for three thousand pounds, from the bridge at Westminster to the bridge at Greenwich; but the queen, by her special command, prevented the putting it into execution.'

In 1729, a poulterer of Leadenhall Market betted fifty pounds he would walk two hundred and two times round the area of Upper Moorfields in twenty-seven hours; and accordingly proceeded at the rate of five miles an hour on the amusing pursuit, 'to the infinite improvement of his business, and great edification of hundreds of spectators.'

To characterise the follies of the day, it will be necessary to add to the account of the walking man another of a hopping man who engaged, in December 1731, to hop five hundred yards in fifty hops in St James's Park. He performed the feat in forty-six.

In February 1770, a bet was laid by a noble earl, that he should find a man who would ride to Edinburgh and back again to London in less time than another noble earl should make a million dots in the most expeditious manner that he could contrive.

In September 1789, a Colonel Ross set out from London for York, on a wager with a Mr Pigot of eight hundred guineas that he reached his destination in forty-eight hours on the same horse. He performed the journey three hours within the time.

On the 17th of May 1817, a respectable farmer of Kirton-Lindsey, for a wager of a few pounds, undertook to ride a pony up two pair of stairs into a chamber of the *George Inn*, and down again; which feat he actually performed before a numerous company, whose astonishment was heightened by the rider being upwards of eleven-stone weight, and his horse less than thirty stones. They were weighed after the feat, to decide another wager.

Southey makes mention in his *Commonplace Book* of a Norfolk gentleman-farmer, who rode his own *boar* for a wager from his own house to the next town, four and a quarter miles distant, twenty guineas the wager, the time allowed being an hour. 'Porco' performed it in fifty minutes.

In the *Annual Register* for 1788 we find the fol-

lowing: 'A young Irish gentleman, for a very considerable wager, set out on Monday, September 22, to walk to Constantinople and back again in one year. It is said that the young gentleman has twenty thousand pounds depending on the performance of the exploit.'

It was during the same year that 'Jerusalem' Whalley made the journey which earned him his name. Being asked on one occasion where he was going, he answered in jest, to Jerusalem. The company present offered to wager any sum that he did not go there; and he took bets to the amount of between fifteen and twenty thousand pounds. The journey was to be performed on foot, except so far as it was necessary to cross the sea; and the exploit was to be finished by playing ball against the walls of that celebrated city. In the *Annual Register* for 1789 it is stated that 'Mr Whalley arrived about June, in Dublin, from his journey to the Holy Land, considerably within the limited time of twelve months.'

The above wagers, however whimsical, were not without a precedent. Some years before, a baronet of some fortune in the north of England (Sir G. Liddel) laid a considerable wager that he would go to Lapland, bring home two females of that country and two reindeer in a given time. He performed the journey, and effected his purpose in every respect. The Lapland women remained in this country for about twelve months; but having a wish to go back to their own country, the baronet furnished them with means and money.

One of the Corbets of Sundorne Castle, near Shrewsbury, made a bet that his leg was the handsomest in the county or kingdom, and staked on his part his magnificent estates. He won. There is a picture in Sundorne Castle representing the measuring of sundry legs.

Popular tradition has long associated the assumption of the Ulster badge—the bloody hand—by the Holte family of Aston, with a barbarous murder committed by Sir Thomas Holte upon his cook, whom he killed with a cleaver. This was about the commencement of the seventeenth century. It need not be said that the assumption of the badge has no connection whatever with this circumstance, which may or may not have occurred. 'The most probable tradition,' says Mr Davidson, the historian of the family, 'of the cause of the commission of the crime, is that Sir Thomas, when riding from hunting, in the course of conversation laid a wager to some amount as to the punctuality of his cook, who, most unfortunately, for once was behind time. Enraged at the jeers of his companions, he hastened into the kitchen, and seizing the first article at hand, avenged himself on the domestic.'

In 1771, a strange trial took place before Lord Mansfield in the court of King's Bench, with the object of recovering the sum of five hundred guineas, laid by the Duke of Queensberry (then Lord March) with a Mr Pigot, whether Sir William Codrington or old Mr Pigot should die first. It had singularly happened that Mr Pigot died suddenly the same morning of the gout in his head, but before either of the parties could by any possibility have been made acquainted with the fact. By the counsel for the

defendant it was urged that (as in the case of a horse dying before the day on which it was to run) the wager was invalid and annulled. Lord Mansfield, however, was of a different opinion; and after a brief charge from that great lawyer, the jury brought in a verdict for the plaintiff of five hundred guineas, and sentenced the defendant to pay the costs of the suit.

At the York assizes in March 1812, a trial came on in which the Rev. B. Gilbert was plaintiff, and Sir Mark Sykes, Baronet, defendant. It appeared that the Baronet, at his own table during a dinner party, in the course of a conversation respecting the hazard to which the life of Bonaparte was exposed, had offered, upon the receipt of one hundred guineas, to pay one guinea a day as long as he (Bonaparte) should remain alive. Mr Gilbert suddenly took up the offer; but finding that the sense of the company was against making a serious matter of a bet proposed at a moment of conviviality, he said: 'If you will submit, Sir Mark, to ask it as a favour, you may be off.' This the Baronet refused to do. The hundred guineas were sent by Mr Gilbert, of which Sir Mark acknowledged the receipt, and he had continued paying the guinea a day for nearly three years. At length he declined further payment, and this action was for recovery of the sum still due upon the contract.

The Earl of March above mentioned, on laying a bet that he would cause a message to be despatched a certain distance quicker than any horse could convey it, won his wager by enclosing the message in a cricket ball, which was thrown from hand to hand by relays of professional cricketers. As Duke of Queensberry, he betted one thousand guineas that he would produce a man who would eat more at a meal than any one whom Sir John Lade could find. The Duke was informed of his success—not being present at the achievement—by the following bulletin from the field of battle: 'My Lord, I have not time to state particulars, but merely to acquaint your Grace that your man beat his antagonist by an apple pie.'

At White's Coffee-house, where, during the last century, gaming was carried on to heavy amounts, a book was always laid upon the table for entering wagers, and in these betting-books, some of which still exist, may be found bets on all conceivable subjects: on marriages, births, deaths; on the duration of a ministry, on the chance of an election, on a rascal's risk of the halter, or the shock of an earthquake. Bets were made that Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, would outlive the old Duchess of Cleveland; that Sir William Burdett, a member of the club, and 'a man of infamous character,' would be the first Baronet to be hanged; and Lord Mountford laid a wager of twenty guineas with Sir John Bland, that Beau Nash outlived Colley Cibber. Lord Mountford and Sir John Bland both blew their brains out in 1755; Cibber died two years later; and Nash survived till 1761.

Walpole, writing to Sir Horace Mann, September 1, 1750, says: 'They have put into the papers a good story made at White's. A man dropped down dead at the door, and was carried in. The club immediately made bets whether he was dead or not; and when they were going

to bleed him, the wagers for his death interposed, and said it would affect the fairness of the bet.'

Certain it is that during this period no subject appears to have been too serious for a bet; and that nothing was considered too trivial a medium, the following lines, founded on fact, bear witness:

The Bucks had dined, and deep in council sat;
Their wine was brilliant, but their wit grew flat.
Up starts his lordship—to the window flies,
And lo! 'A race! a race!' in rapture cries.
'Where?' quoth Sir John.—'Why, see two drops of rain
Start from the summit of the crystal pane:
A thousand pounds which drop, with nimblest force,
Performs its current down the slippery course.'
The bets were made: in dire suspense they wait
For victory, pendent on the nod of Fate.
Now down the sash, unconscious of the prize,
The bubbles roll, like pearls from Chloe's eyes.
But, ah! the glittering joys of life are short;
How oft two jostling steeds have spoiled the sport!
So, thus attraction, by coercive laws,
Th' approaching drops into one bubble draws.
Each cursed his fate that thus their project crossed:
How hard their lot, who neither won nor lost!

AN OLD CHAPTER RARELY READ.

'Who is the first king mentioned in the Bible?' is a question frequently asked by some ingenious youth 'seeking occasion' against his elders. Of course the elderly persons so entrapped think of every one but James I. of England. They are indeed pretty sure to betray a lamentable ignorance of a chapter which for two hundred and seventy-eight years has been printed at the beginning of everybody's English Bible—namely, the solemn dedication of the authorised version of the Scriptures to the 'most dread sovereign' who had set the translators to work. But nobody ever looks at it nowadays, which is a pity, as it well repays the trouble of perusal.

The first thought of any casual reader of this old and, in a sense, forgotten chapter, written in 1611, would be a feeling of surprise that such a delightful bit of 'the antique' should be in everybody's hands and yet almost entirely unknown. It comes from a period not so very remote from our own; but its contents read like a story from the depths of the middle ages. Events have moved so fast, and the whole character of English society has been so completely changed, that we hold our breath in amazement at the cringing subservience and fulsome adulation of this address. It seems scarcely credible that within three hundred years of our own day such a spirit and posture should have been found in sturdy Englishmen, still less in the ripest scholars of the time. But so it was; and though the compliments were probably intended to be taken *cum grano salis*, their laboured affectation of sincerity manifests a temper entirely alien to the spirit of independence we like to ascribe to our ancestors.

But this dedication is worthy of attention for other reasons. It is said to have been written by the Bishop of Gloucester, and is distinguished by great picturesqueness of style and much elegance and force of language. It begins with a graphic sketch of the Reformed Church of England as 'our Sion,' encompassed by evil-wishers whose expectation it was that 'thick and palpable clouds of dark-

ness' would overshadow it, at the critical moment which they describe as 'the setting of that bright Occidental Star, Queen Elizabeth.' 'Occidental Star' is good! It sounds well, and it gives 'the wise men' of the West a luminary of their own to follow. But a star after all is not the brightest object in the firmament, however beautiful it may be in evening's twilight. And our good translators hit a weakness of 'the Most High and Mighty Prince' when they reserved a bolder figure for himself, and hailed 'the appearance of his majesty as of the *Sun* in his strength!' The king could not complain of the inevitable compliment to good Queen Bess, whom the people had taken to their hearts; but it may be doubted whether he held her altogether in 'happy memory.' Time had doubtless brought round its revenge; but he could scarcely have forgiven or forgotten the tragedy at Fotheringhay. Cleverly, therefore, is the flattery turned which overpowers the radiance of the 'Occidental Star' with the rising glory of the '*Sun* in his strength.'

And there was something in it. For most certainly the accession of James raised legitimate hopes of a long period of stable prosperity to the land and throne. Had that monarch been less of a Solomon in his own esteem, and endowed with common-sense instead of learning, it is probable that the whole course of events would have been different. The development of England's liberties might have been accomplished without the violence of revolution, and the king's children's children seated on the throne securely. But for want of *savoir-faire*, the sunshine of His Majesty's early years was speedily overclouded: 'the supposed and surmised mists' were dispelled only for a space; thunder was in the air, and presently a storm burst forth which wrecked both the altar and the throne.

It is touching to read the allusion to His Majesty's 'hopeful Seed,' when we recollect their misfortunes. They were now only two boys and a girl. The eldest, Prince Henry, died the very next year after the issue of this version of the Scriptures; the other boy became Charles I.; and the girl, Elizabeth, afterwards wedded to a German prince, unfortunate in war, speedily became a widow, and in her sons a very Niobe of tears. It makes such a difference *which* end of the telescope of time you look through! Who could have foreseen that errors of judgment and want of statecraft could so soon have ruined these sanguine hopes of His Majesty's scholars! They appeared to have reason on their side, for in their sovereign had they not, in place of a capricious woman, 'the confidence and resolution of a Man?' Was he not a 'sanctified Person,' whose 'very name is precious' to his people? Yet how soon was their forecast of events overthrown! The royal house of Stuart is now practically extinct.

But we may easily forgive the scholars of King James for building their hopes on 'so learned and judicious a Prince.' Relying on such a patron of their important task, they securely bid defiance to 'self-conceited brethren.' It was the fashion in those days to ascribe a difference of opinion to some moral defect; and the criticisms of opponents are discounted beforehand by our translators as 'calumniations and hard interpretations.' They quite expect to receive 'the censures of ill-meaning and discontented persons, who are sure to like

nothing which is not hammered on their anvil.' But the translators are not afraid, though they may be 'traduced and maligned,' being 'supported within by the truth and innocency of a good conscience,' and sustained 'without by the powerful protection of Your Majesty's grace and favour.' Nobody in these days would dream of giving either of these reasons in supporting the goodness of a translation! They had, however, sounder reasons, which they are too modest to mention, for their self-confidence; for their scholarship and mastery of their mother-tongue have made their work 'the wonder of the world.' This they hope and pray the king himself may be, by reason of his being 'enriched with singular and extraordinary graces.' The result destroys any claim they may have had to prophecy, but has established the excellence of their translation. It has laid hold on the affections of Englishmen through the generations of three centuries; it has enriched and settled the language, as Luther's Bible did for German; and with all its faults, it still holds its ground, and can give long odds to all the revised and re-revised versions of the present day. The dedication itself is written in graceful and telling English; and there is not a word in it which has become obsolete or even antiquated. It is a good specimen of the version itself, which is indeed 'a well of English undefiled.' We may smile at its stilted panegyric of a Prince whom later historians have described as 'a learned fool,' and may wonder at the spirit of bondage in its expressions of loyalty. But still these side-lights on a former age are full of interest and instruction, and the dedication may be profitably read as a telling chapter in the history of England, and a striking sketch of men and manners in that critical period of the British nation.

RESURGAM.

THE Winter morn of cheerless gray
Dawns slowly up the sky;
And in the cold, bleak light of day,
The drifting snow-wreaths lie.

And all green things are lost to sight
Beneath a weight of snow,
And down into the cold, dark night
The Winter day doth go.

But 'mid the gloom of wintry skies,
I see a vision fair
Of fresh Spring morns that brightly rise
With sweet and balmy air.

Even thus, most gracious Lord, amid
The gloom of death, we see
Life everlasting, safely hid
And garnered, Lord, in Thee.

The dreary grave is but the field
Where lies the hopeful grain,
And what with many a tear we yield,
Shall be our own again.

J. C. HOWDEN.

Printed and Published by W. & R. CHAMBERS, 47 Paternoster Row, LONDON, and 339 High Street, EDINBURGH.